

Rules and Regulations

Federal Register

Vol. 60, No. 14

Monday, January 23, 1995

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

9 CFR Part 78

[Docket No. 94-134-1]

Brucellosis in Cattle; State and Area Classifications; Colorado

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Interim rule and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are amending the brucellosis regulations concerning the interstate movement of cattle by changing the classification of Colorado from Class A to Class Free. We have determined that Colorado meets the standards for Class Free status. This action relieves certain restrictions on the interstate movement of cattle from Colorado.

DATES: Interim rule effective January 23, 1995. Consideration will be given only to comments received on or before March 24, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Please send an original and three copies of your comments to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, P.O. Drawer 810, Riverdale, MD 20738. Please state that your comments refer to Docket No. 94-134-1. Comments received may be inspected at USDA, room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to inspect comments are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Michael J. Gilsdorf, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Cattle Diseases and Surveillance Staff, Veterinary Services, APHIS, USDA, P.O. Drawer 810,

Riverdale, MD 20738. The telephone number for the agency contact will change when agency offices in Hyattsville, MD, move to Riverdale, MD, during January. Telephone: (301) 436-4918 (Hyattsville); (301) 734-4918 (Riverdale).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Brucellosis is a contagious disease affecting animals and humans, caused by bacteria of the genus *Brucella*.

The brucellosis regulations, contained in 9 CFR part 78 (referred to below as the regulations), provide a system for classifying States or portions of States according to the rate of *Brucella* infection present, and the general effectiveness of a brucellosis control and eradication program. The classifications are Class Free, Class A, Class B, and Class C. States or areas that do not meet the minimum standards for Class C are required to be placed under Federal quarantine.

The brucellosis Class Free classification is based on a finding of no known brucellosis in cattle for the 12 months preceding classification as Class Free. The Class C classification is for States or areas with the highest rate of brucellosis. Class B and Class A fall between these two extremes. Restrictions on moving cattle interstate become less stringent as a State approaches or achieves Class Free status.

The standards for the different classifications of States or areas entail (1) maintaining a cattle herd infection rate not to exceed a stated level during 12 consecutive months; (2) tracing back to the farm of origin and successfully closing a stated percent of all brucellosis reactors found in the course of Market Cattle Identification (MCI) testing; (3) maintaining a surveillance system that includes testing of dairy herds, participation of all recognized slaughtering establishments in the MCI program, identification and monitoring of herds at high risk of infection (including herds adjacent to infected herds and herds from which infected animals have been sold or received), and having an individual herd plan in effect within a stated number of days after the herd owner is notified of the finding of brucellosis in a herd he or she owns; and (4) maintaining minimum

procedural standards for administering the program.

Before the effective date of this interim rule, Colorado was classified as a Class A State.

To attain and maintain Class Free status, a State or area must (1) remain free from field strain *Brucella abortus* infection for 12 consecutive months or longer; (2) trace back at least 90 percent of all brucellosis reactors found in the course of MCI testing to the farm of origin; (3) successfully close at least 95 percent of the MCI reactor cases traced to the farm of origin during the 12 consecutive month period immediately prior to the most recent anniversary of the date the State or area was classified Class Free; and (4) have a specified surveillance system, as described above, including an approved individual herd plan in effect within 15 days of locating the source herd or recipient herd.

After reviewing the brucellosis program records for Colorado, we have concluded that the State meets the standards for Class Free status. Therefore, we are removing Colorado from the list of Class A States in § 78.41(b) and adding it to the list of Class Free States in § 78.41(a). This action relieves certain restrictions on moving cattle interstate from Colorado.

Immediate Action

The Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that there is good cause for publishing this interim rule without prior opportunity for public comment. Immediate action is warranted to remove unnecessary restrictions on the interstate movement of cattle from Colorado.

Because prior notice and other public procedures with respect to this action are impracticable and contrary to the public interest under these conditions, we find good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553 to make it effective upon publication in the **Federal Register**. We will consider comments that are received within 60 days of publication of this rule in the **Federal Register**. After the comment period closes, we will publish another document in the **Federal Register**. It will include a discussion of any comments we receive and any amendments we are making to the rule as a result of the comments.

Executive Order 12866 and Regulatory Flexibility Act

This interim rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12866.

For this action, the Office of Management and Budget has waived its review process required by Executive Order 12866.

Cattle moved interstate are moved for slaughter, for use as breeding stock, or for feeding. Changing the brucellosis status of Colorado from Class A to Class Free will promote economic growth by reducing certain testing and other requirements governing the interstate movement of cattle from the State. Testing requirements for cattle moved interstate for immediate slaughter or to quarantined feedlots are not affected by this change. Cattle from certified brucellosis-free herds moving interstate are not affected by this change.

The groups affected by this action will be herd owners in Colorado, as well as buyers and importers of cattle from the State.

There are an estimated 13,000 cattle herds in Colorado that would be affected by this rule. Ninety-eight percent of these are owned by small entities. Most of these herds are not certified-free. Test-eligible cattle offered for sale from other than certified-free herds must have a negative test under present Class A status regulations, but not under regulations concerning Class Free status. This testing costs approximately \$3.25 per head. If such testing were distributed equally among all herds affected by this rule, Class Free status would save approximately \$8.50 per herd.

Therefore, we believe that changing the brucellosis status for Colorado would not have a significant economic impact on the small entities affected by this interim rule.

Under these circumstances, the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has determined that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Executive Order 12372

This program/activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.025 and is subject to Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. (See 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V.)

Executive Order 12778

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. This rule: (1) Preempts all State and local laws and regulations that are

in conflict with this rule; (2) has no retroactive effect; and (3) does not require administrative proceedings before parties may file suit in court challenging this rule.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This document contains no information collection or recordkeeping requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

List of Subjects in 9 CFR Part 78

Animal diseases, Bison, Cattle, Hogs, Quarantine, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation.

Accordingly, 9 CFR part 78 is amended as follows:

PART 78—BRUCELLOSIS

1. The authority citation for part 78 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 21 U.S.C. 111–114a–1, 114g, 115, 117, 120, 121, 123–126, 134b, and 134f; 7 CFR 2.17, 2.51, and 371.2(d).

§ 78.41 [Amended]

2. Section 78.41, paragraph (a), is amended by adding “Colorado,” immediately after “Arizona.”

3. Section 78.41, paragraph (b), is amended by removing “Colorado.”

Done in Washington, DC, this 17th day of January 1995.

Terry L. Medley,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 95–1636 Filed 1–20–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

9 CFR Part 92

[Docket No. 94–032–2]

Importation of Brushtail Possums and Hedgehogs From New Zealand

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Affirmation of interim rule as final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting as a final rule, without change, an interim rule that amended the animal importation regulations to prohibit the importation of brushtail possums and hedgehogs from New Zealand. This action is necessary to prevent the introduction of tuberculous animals into the United States. The intended effect is to protect domestic livestock from tuberculosis.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 22, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Samuel Richeson, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Import-Export Animals

Staff, National Center for Import-Export, Veterinary Services, APHIS, USDA, room 764, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782, (301) 436–8170.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

In an interim rule effective and published in the **Federal Register** on June 6, 1994 (59 FR 29186–29187, Docket No. 94–032–1), we amended the animal importation regulations in 9 CFR part 92 by prohibiting the importation of brushtail possums and hedgehogs from New Zealand.

Comments on the interim rule were required to be received on or before August 5, 1994. We did not receive any comments. The facts presented in the interim rule still provide a basis for the rule.

This action also affirms the information contained in the interim rule concerning Executive Order 12866 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act, Executive Order 12778, and the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Further, for this action, the Office of Management and Budget has waived the review process required by Executive Order 12866.

List of Subjects in 9 CFR Part 92

Animal diseases, Imports, Livestock, Poultry and poultry products, Quarantine, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

PART 92—IMPORTATION OF CERTAIN ANIMALS AND POULTRY AND CERTAIN ANIMAL AND POULTRY PRODUCTS; INSPECTION AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN MEANS OF CONVEYANCE AND SHIPPING CONTAINERS THEREON

Accordingly, we are adopting as a final rule, without change, the interim rule that was published at 59 FR 29186–29187 on June 6, 1994, and that amended 9 CFR part 92 by adding a new subpart G.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1622; 19 U.S.C. 1306; 21 U.S.C. 102–105, 111, 114a, 134a, 134b, 134c, 134d, 134f, 135, 136, and 136a; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.17, 2.51, and 371.2(d).

Done in Washington, DC, this 17th day of January 1995.

Lonnie J. King,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 95–1634 Filed 1–20–95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P